

SPAWN



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89

DIGITAL
EDITION

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TODD McFARLANE AND IMAGE COMICS PRESENT...

THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

PLOT
Brian Holguin
Todd McFarlane

STORY
Brian Holguin

PENCILER
Greg Capullo

INKER
Danny Miki
Lee Matsunami

COPY EDITOR and LETTERING
Tom Orzechowski

COLOR
Dan Kemp
Brian Haberlin

COVER ART
Greg Capullo
Todd McFarlane

president of entertainment
TERRY FITZGERALD

executive director of publishing
BEAU SMITH

managing editor
MELANIE SIMMONS

art director
BRENT ASHE

designers
JOHN GALLAGHER
BOYD WILLIAMS

publisher for Image Comics
JIM VALENTINO

DEDICATED TO
My good pal, Dave Thomas

SPAWN 88 Summary

A frightened child named Mary tells the story of her life with her mean, abusive stepfather. When Sam and Twitch investigate his untimely death, they rule it an accident even though it seems like they know their red-cloaked informant was meting out his type of justice. Meanwhile, Cogliostro meets with representatives from both Heaven and Hell to discuss the precarious balance of earth matters that has been disturbed with the resignation of their missing pawn. Mr. Hell leaves the meeting with a final threat to Cog that he needs to deliver Spawn to him quickly or else, while Ms. Heaven concedes that perhaps the will of God isn't quite what it used to be.



TODD McFARLANE
PRODUCTIONS



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CORNWALL, CONNECTICUT. AS THE LAST
FADING BEAMS OF SUNLIGHT FILTER
THROUGH THE BRIGHT SPRAYS OF
AUTUMN LEAVES...

JUDGE MASON EVERETT STERLING III
PULLS INTO THE DRIVEWAY OF HIS
SEVEN-BEDROOM, RED-BRICK
GOTHIC REVIVAL HOME.

AS HE
AMBLES UP
THE MARBLE
STEPS OF
THE ENTRY,
TODAY'S
CASE IS
STILL ON
JUDGE
STERLING'S
MIND.

A REMORSELESS BAND OF TEENAGE
REPROBATES, BLAMING THEIR ACTIONS ON
THE VAGUE FAILINGS OF "SOCIETY." JUDGE
STERLING WOULD HEAR NOTHING OF IT.

HE'S NEVER HAD MUCH TOLERANCE
FOR THAT SORT OF NONSENSE.
IT IS ACTION, NOT ATTITUDE, THAT
DEFINE A MAN'S CHARACTER.

SIMPLY PUT,
A MAN IS
WHAT HE
DOES.

HE SIFTS THROUGH THE DAY'S
MAIL: DINNER INVITATIONS,
REQUESTS FOR CHARITABLE
DONATIONS, THE USUAL.

HE
LOOSENS
HIS TIE
AND
INHALES
DEEPLY.

IT'S BEEN A
LONG WEEK FOR
JUDGE STERLING.
HE HAS EARNED
A LITTLE
RECREATION.





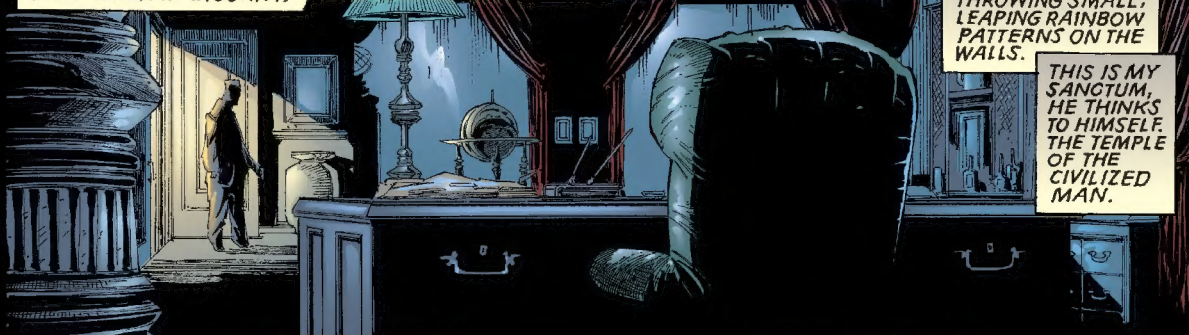
HELLO,
ANYBODY HERE?
SERAPHINA?

THE MAID AND THE
GARDENERS HAVE
ALREADY LEFT.
JUDGE STERLING
IS ALONE. HE CAN
RELAX NOW.

HE HAS ALWAYS FOUND SOMETHING VERY INVITING,
REASSURING ABOUT THE STUDY. THE WOOD PANELING
WAS HAND-CARVED A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM
INCH-THICK MAHOGANY.

LIGHT STREAMS
THROUGH LEADED
GLASS WINDOWS,
THROWING SMALL,
LEAPING RAINBOW
PATTERNS ON THE
WALLS.

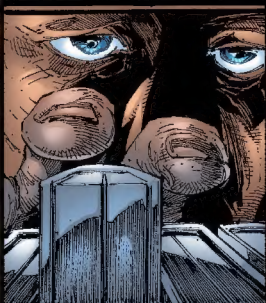
THIS IS MY
SANCTUM,
HE THINKS
TO HIMSELF.
THE TEMPLE
OF THE
CIVILIZED
MAN.



HE POURS HIM-
SELF A DRINK.
THREE FINGERS
OF A RATHER
EXPENSIVE
SINGLE MALT
SCOTCH AND
TWO PERFECTLY
FORMED ICE
CUBES.



UNLOCKING A CABINET,
HE RIFLES THROUGH A
COLLECTION OF VIDEO
TAPES. JUDGE STERLING
BELIEVES YOU CAN
LEARN A LOT ABOUT A
PERSON BY HIS TASTE
IN FILMS.



HIS FATHER, A
GREAT, STERN
MAN WHO
SPOKE IN A
DEEP BARTONE,
WAS PARTICULARLY
FOND OF
WESTERNS.

HIS LATE WIFE,
BARBARA,
LOVED OLD
ROMANCES
AND SCREW-
BALL COMEDIES.
STANLEY
DONEN, FRANK
CAPRA, THAT
SORT OF THING.



JUDGE STERLING'S
OWN TASTES,
HOWEVER, ARE
RATHER MORE
SELECTIVE.



THE BOOZE PAINTS HIS THROAT, SMOKY YET SOOTHING. HIS WEEK-DAY LIFE OF COURT-HOUSE PRESSURES AND LYING CRIMINALS FADES INTO MEMORY.

THIS TAPE IS A NEW ONE. HE'S BEEN WAITING ALL WEEK TO VIEW IT. JUDGE STERLING IS A COLLECTOR WITH VERY SPECIALIZED TASTES.

HIS FAVORED SUBJECT MATTER IS VERY DIFFICULT TO COME BY. STILL, THROUGH A TIGHT NETWORK OF FELLOW CONNOISSEURS, HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO AMASS A SIZABLE LIBRARY.

THIS ONE'S QUITE GOOD, HE THINKS TO HIMSELF. THE GIRLS CAN'T BE OLDER THAN 11. THE BOY EVEN YOUNGER. THE SOUND IS RATHER POOR BUT THE PICTURE IS REASONABLY SHARP.

HE SINKS INTO THE RICH, WARM LEATHER OF THE COUCH. JUST WATCH. AND WAIT.

WAIT FOR THE GOOD PART...

WHAT WAS THAT?

PLINK.
KZZZT

TURN AROUND

WHO ARE YOU?
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

A full-page comic book illustration of a character named Mason Sterling. He is depicted from the waist up, wearing a black, form-fitting suit with a high collar and a mask that leaves only his glowing yellow eyes visible. He has a large, flowing red cape that billows out behind him. His right hand is raised, with fingers spread, as if making a point or gesturing. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly a prison or a stage, with chains visible in the lower corners. Two speech bubbles are present: one on the left containing the text 'MASON STERLING...' and one on the right containing the text 'IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO BE JUDGED!'.

MASON
STERLING...

IT IS
TIME FOR
YOU TO BE
JUDGED!

GET
OUT OF MY
HOUSE!
DO YOU
KNOW WHO
I AM?!

YOU ARE ON
MY PROPERTY!
THAT MEANS I
CAN DO ANYTHING
I WANT TO
YOU!

I CAN
SHOOT YOUR
BALLS OFF AND
STUFF THEM IN
YOUR MOUTH AND
STILL CALL IT SELF-
DEFENSE.

HIS VOICE IS
ALL BRAVADO,
BUT JUDGE
STERLING'S
OLD BONES
ARE SHAKING.

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

HAH!
I GOT
HIM!

IT'S BEEN A
LONG TIME
SINCE HE'S
FIRED A GUN.
HE CAN'T
BELIEVE
HIS LUCK.

WHAT
THE
HELL IS
THIS?



WHAT
ARE
YOU?


NO. THE
QUESTION IS,
WHAT ARE YOU?
YOU ARE A FOUL,
TWISTED LITTLE
MAN WHO PREYS
VICARIOUSLY ON
THE SUFFERING
OF OTHERS.

I NEVER
TOUCHED
ANYONE. I
SWEAR! ALL
I DID WAS
WATCH.

YOU
PAID PEOPLE
TO PROCURE
THOSE TAPES FOR
YOU. HOW DID YOU
THINK THEY WERE
GOING TO GET
THEM?

YOU HAVE
SUBSIDIZED
THE PAIN AND
DEBASEMENT OF
OTHERS, ALL FOR
YOUR OWN SICK
AMUSEMENT.

AND
NOW IT
ENDS.



PLEASE,
JUST LET ME GO
AND I'LL NEVER DO
IT AGAIN. I SWEAR!
I CAN PAY YOU.
ANYTHING YOU
WANT. JUST LET
ME GO!

THERE
ARE THINGS
YOUR MONEY
CAN'T BUY YOU,
STERLING. YOU
KNOW WHAT HAS
TO HAPPEN
NOW. DON'T
YOU?



NO. PLEASE!
I'M BEGGING
YOU!



ALL
RIGHT...

WITH A SHAKY HAND,
JUDGE MASON
EVERETT STERLING III
TAKES A FIVE-HUNDRED
DOLLAR MONT-BLANC
FOUNTAIN PEN AND
WRITES OUT A
CONFESSION ON A
SHEET OF CREAM
COLORED STATIONERY.

IN IT, HE ENUMERATES
HIS SINS, LISTS THE
NAMES AND WHERE-
ABOUTS OF HIS
CO-CONSPIRATORS, AND
BEGS FORGIVENESS
FROM WHOMEVER
MIGHT BE KIND
ENOUGH TO GIVE IT.

WHEN HE IS FINISHED,
THE COLD STEEL
BARREL OF HIS HAND-
GUN IS PLACED
FLUSH AGAINST HIS
RIGHT TEMPLE.

BLAM!

AND A
SINGLE
ROUND
IS FIRED,
ECHOING
INTO THE
NIGHT.

NEW
YORK
CITY.

NIGHTTIME IN
MANHATTAN.



A SHADOW PLAY
OF ASPHALT AND
NEON, FLESH
AND FANTASY.



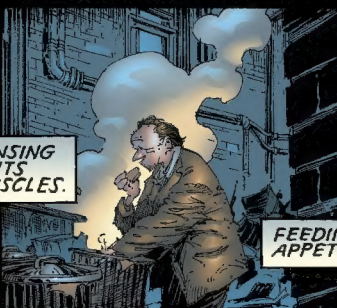
THE CITY IS
ALIVE AT
NIGHT, LIKE
SOME GREAT
MYTHIC
BEAST.

BREATHING.

STALKING.



TENSING
ITS
MUSCLES.



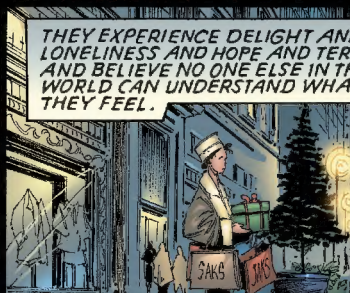
FEEDING ITS
APPETITES.

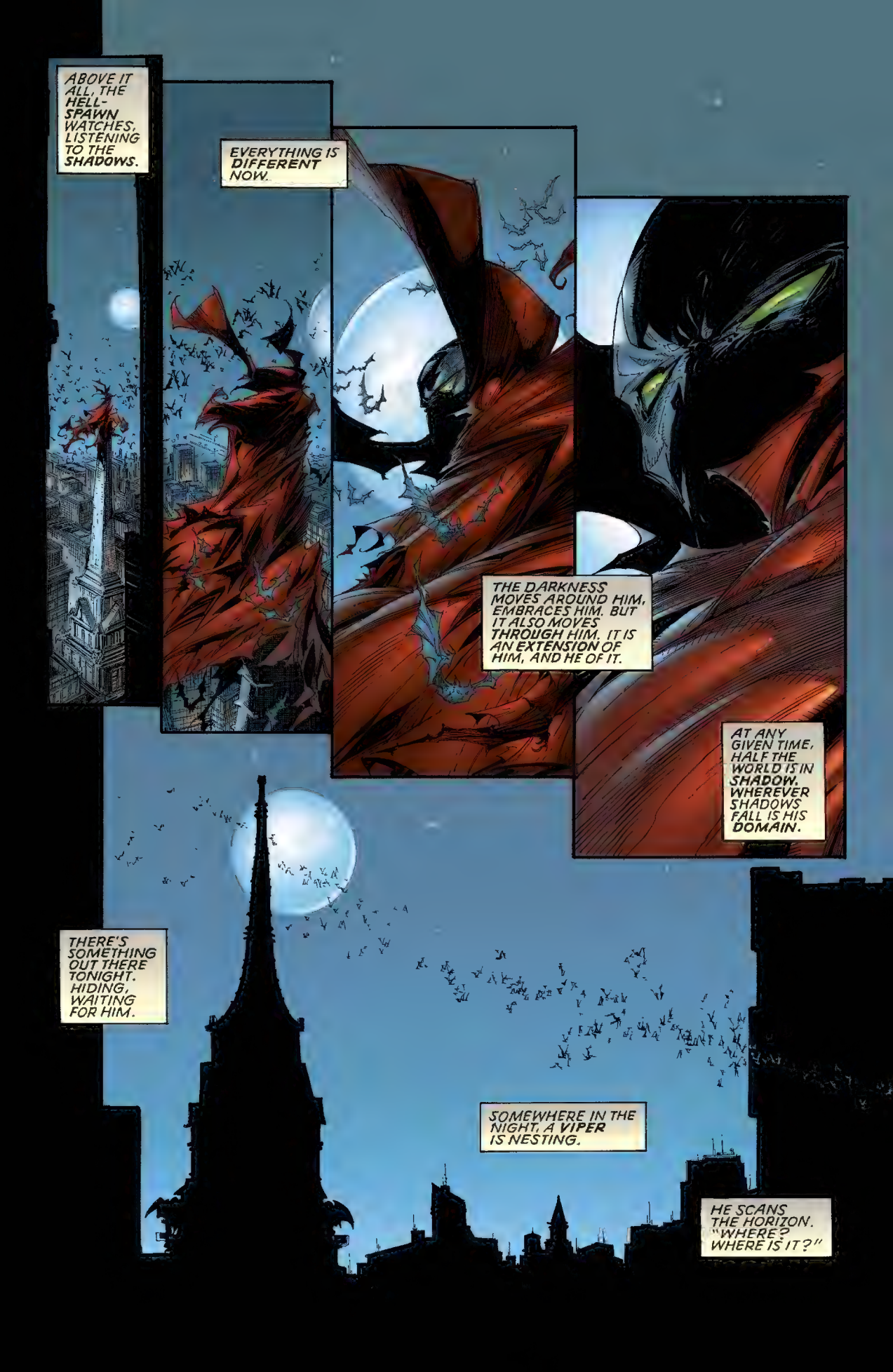


TOWERING
SKYSCRAPERS BEAR
SILENT WITNESS
AS COUNTLESS,
FRAGILE LITTLE
SOULS MINGLE AND
SEPARATE, FALL
TOGETHER AND
FALL APART.



THEY EXPERIENCE DELIGHT AND
LONELINESS AND HOPE AND TERROR,
AND BELIEVE NO ONE ELSE IN THE
WORLD CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT
THEY FEEL.





ABOVE IT
ALL, THE
HELL-
SPAWN
WATCHES,
LISTENING
TO THE
SHADOWS.

EVERYTHING IS
DIFFERENT
NOW.

THE DARKNESS
MOVES AROUND HIM,
EMBRACES HIM. BUT
IT ALSO MOVES
THROUGH HIM. IT IS
AN EXTENSION OF
HIM, AND HE OF IT.

AT ANY
GIVEN TIME,
HALF THE
WORLD IS IN
SHADOW.
WHEREVER
SHADOWS
FALL IS HIS
DOMAIN.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
OUT THERE
TONIGHT.
HIDING.
WAITING
FOR HIM.

SOMEWHERE IN THE
NIGHT, A VIPER
IS NESTING.

HE SCANS
THE HORIZON.
"WHERE?
WHERE IS IT?"



THERE.

COGLIOSTRO'S
LIBRARY,
SECRETED
IN THE SUB-
BASEMENT
OF THE
NEW YORK
MUSEUM OF
ANTIQUITIES.

THE REPOSITORY
OF ALL EARTHLY
KNOWLEDGE
REGARDING
THE CURSE
THAT UNTIL
RECENTLY
AFFLICTED
SPAWN.

HIS
CLOAK
RIPPLES
WITH
AWARE-
NESS.

DOORS OPEN,
ALARMS FALL SILENT
AT HIS WHIM.

THE SHADOWS CALL HIM.





"AND THE
SUN TURNED
BLACK AS
SACKCLOTH, AND
THE OCEANS
CHURNED WITH
BLOOD..."



"AND
THROUGHOUT
ALL THE
NATIONS OF MEN,
THERE WAS GREAT
WAILING AND
GNASHING OF
TEETH..."



Oh, I
THINK
I QUITE
LIKE
THAT.

WHO
ARE
YOU?



I DON'T
THINK THERE'S
ANY NEED FOR
INTRODUCTIONS,
DO YOU?

MIDTOWN.

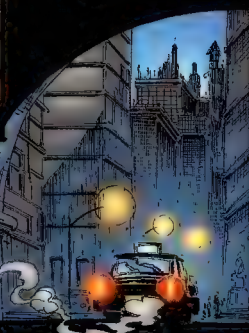
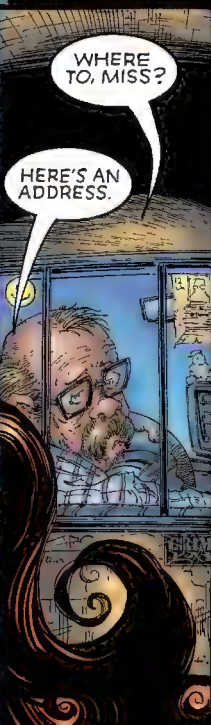
WHERE
TO, MISS?

HERE'S AN
ADDRESS.

FIRST
TIME IN
NEW
YORK?

NO.
NOT AT ALL.
BUT IT HAS
BEEN A WHILE.
THINGS HAVE
CHANGED
QUITE A BIT
SINCE I
WAS HERE
LAST.

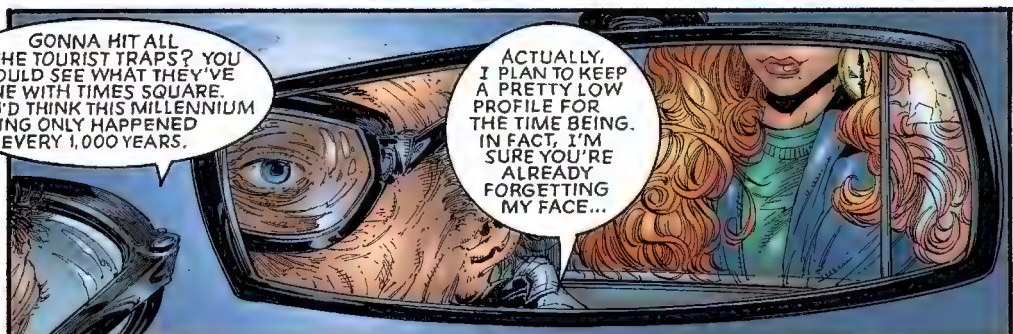
THAT'S A
FACT. SO, uh...
BUSINESS OR
PLEASURE?
YOUR TRIP,
I MEAN.



TO BE
HONEST, I
HAVEN'T QUITE
WORKED THAT
OUT YET. **BOTH**,
I SUPPOSE, IF
I MANAGE IT
RIGHT.

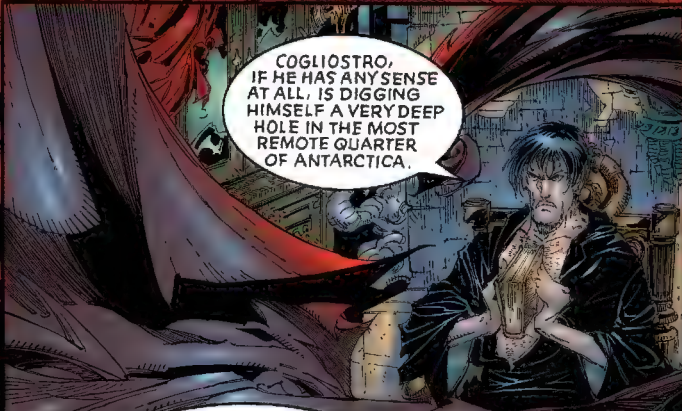
GONNA HIT ALL
THE TOURIST TRAPS? YOU
SHOULD SEE WHAT THEY'VE
DONE WITH TIMES SQUARE.
YOU'D THINK THIS MILLENNIUM
THING ONLY HAPPENED
EVERY 1,000 YEARS.

ACTUALLY,
I PLAN TO KEEP
A PRETTY LOW
PROFILE FOR
THE TIME BEING.
IN FACT, I'M
SURE YOU'RE
ALREADY
FORGETTING
MY FACE...





WHERE IS COG?




COGLIOSTRO, IF HE HAS ANY SENSE AT ALL, IS DIGGING HIMSELF A VERY DEEP HOLE IN THE MOST REMOTE QUARTER OF ANTARCTICA.


NOT THAT IT WILL HELP HIM ANY.

BUT HE IS NOT A CONCERN OF YOURS, YOU AND I, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE QUITE A BIT TO DISCUSS.

THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT.



OK, BUT THERE IS. NOW, I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, OR HOW DEEPLY THE RAMIFICATIONS OF YOUR ACTIONS RUN.



YOU HAVE CAUSED A GREAT DEAL OF DISCOMFORT TO A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE. YOU ARE A CHILD PLAYING WITH MATCHES WHO IS DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO BURNING THE HOUSE DOWN.



BUT... LET'S LEAVE THAT ASIDE FOR A MOMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT WE HAVE UNDERESTIMATED YOU. YOU ARE FAR MORE CLEVER THAN WE GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR.

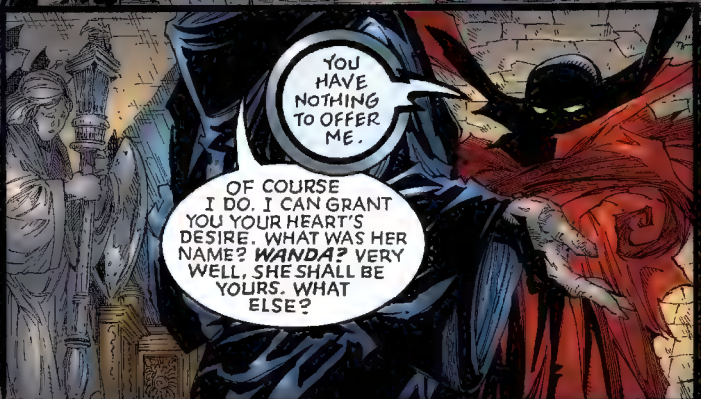
BUT YOU *DID* MAKE A DEAL, AND IT IS ONE TO WHICH YOU *WILL* BE HELD. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



SIMMONG MADE A DEAL. SIMMONS IS DEAD.

OK, PLEASE. YOU DON'T THINK YOU ARE THE FIRST TO TRY THAT LITTLE LOOP-HOLE, DO YOU? I'M AFRAID IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.

STILL, SITUATIONS BEING WHAT THEY ARE, I AM NOT AT ALL OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF RE-NEGOTIATION.



YOU HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER ME.

OF COURSE I DO. I CAN GRANT YOU YOUR HEART'S DESIRE. WHAT WAS HER NAME? *WANDA*? VERY WELL, SHE SHALL BE YOURS. WHAT ELSE?



TRICKS. LIES.


OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU HAD A RATHER BAD EXPERIENCE WITH MY *ASSOCIATE*. I NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD WHY HE DOES THAT. I SUPPOSE HE THINKS IT'S FUNNY.

BUT I BELIEVE IN DEALING PLAINLY. IF WANDA IS WHAT YOU WANT, WHY NOT JUST *GIVE* HER TO YOU? IT'S A LOT SIMPLER IN THE LONG RUN.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER, DEAR BOY, IS THAT YOU ARE *IMPORTANT* TO US. TO *ME*. I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY. PLEASE, TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU...




YOU CAN GO BACK TO HELL AND ROT.



THAT
WAS RATHER
RUDE. WHY WOULD
YOU SAY SOMETHING
LIKE THAT? ARE YOU
TRYING TO MAKE ME
ANGRY? I DON'T
THINK THAT'S WHAT
YOU REALLY WANT
TO DO.

YOU
HAVE NO
CONCEPT OF
WHAT I AM.
NO CONCEPT
OF WHAT
POWER
I WIELD.

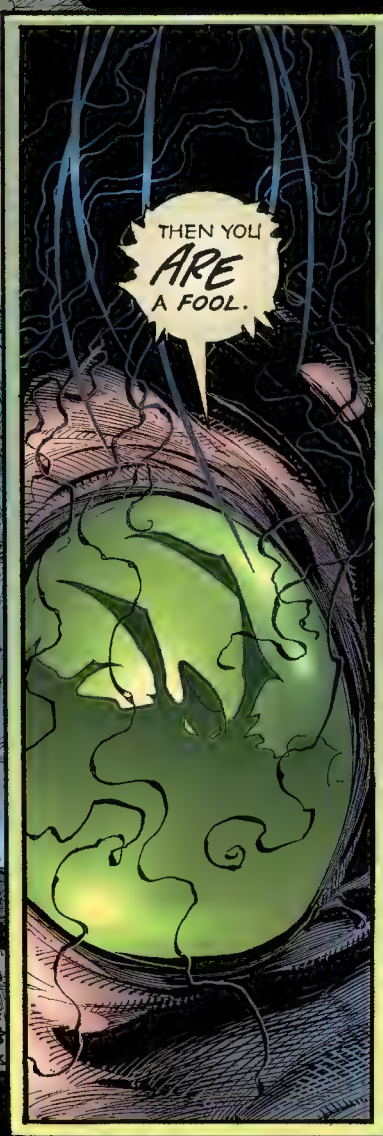


I AM
OLDER THAN
MAN. I AM
OLDER THAN THIS
PATHETIC **DIRT**
CLOD WE ARE
STANDING ON. I
AM OLDER THAN
TIME.

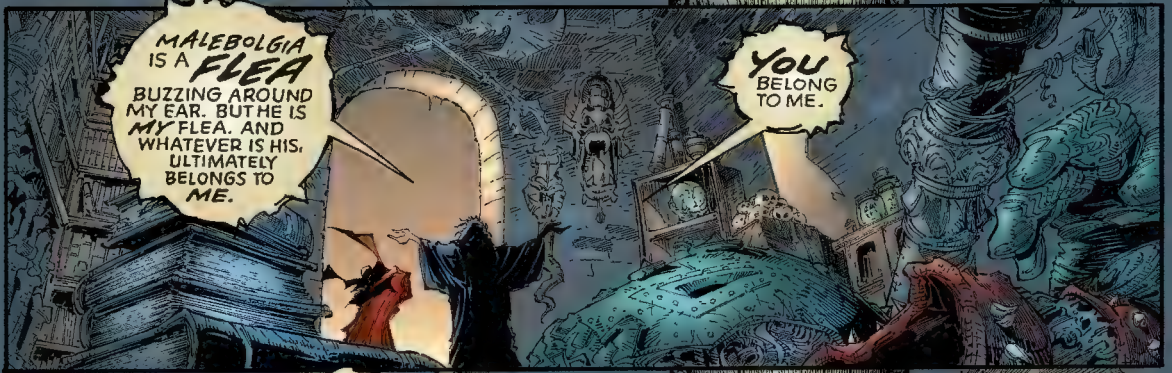
THERE IS
NOTHING IN YOUR
TINY "EXPERIENCE"
THAT COULD
POSSIBLY LEND YOU
THE PROPER
PERSPECTIVE AS
TO WHAT YOU ARE
DEALING
WITH.

YOU ARE
QUITE OUT
OF YOUR LEAGUE,
BOY. YOU MADE A
DEAL, AND WE
EXPECT YOU
TO HONOR
IT.

I'M NOT
AFRAID OF
MALEBOLGIA
AND I'M NOT
AFRAID OF
YOU.



THEN YOU
ARE
A FOOL.

Malebolgia, a figure in a dark, tattered robe, stands in a room with a large, ornate green dragon in the background. He is gesturing towards the dragon.

MALEBOLGIA
IS A **FLEA**
BUZZING AROUND
MY EAR. BUT HE IS
MY FLEA. AND
WHATEVER IS HIS,
ULTIMATELY
BELONGS TO
ME.

YOU
BELONG
TO ME.

OR I CAN
BE VERY
GENEROUS.

I CAN
BE VERY
UNPLEASANT IF
THE MOOD STRIKES.
I CAN HEAP SUCH
MISERIES UPON YOU
THAT **NO WORDS**
IN YOUR PETTY
LITTLE LANGUAGE
COULD BEGIN
TO DESCRIBE
THEM.

YOU CAN GO
OFF AND CREATE
WHATEVER WORLDS
YOU LIKE IN YOUR OWN
IMAGE. POPULATE THEM
ALL WITH BILLIONS
OF "WANDAS." I
DON'T CARE.

BUT WHEN
THE TIME COMES,
YOU **MUST** DO WHAT
I ASK. I CAN GRANT
YOU YOUR EVERY
WISH OR I CAN
HURT IN WAYS
YOU'VE NEVER
IMAGINED.

I CAN
MAKE YOU
LORD OF THE
EIGHTH CIRCLE.
I'LL SERVE YOU
MALEBOLGIA'S
HEART ON A
PLATE IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU WANT.
I CAN MAKE
A **GOD** OUT
OF YOU.

BUT I
WILL **NEVER,**
EVER
LET YOU SLIP
FROM MY GRASP.
IS THAT
CLEAR?



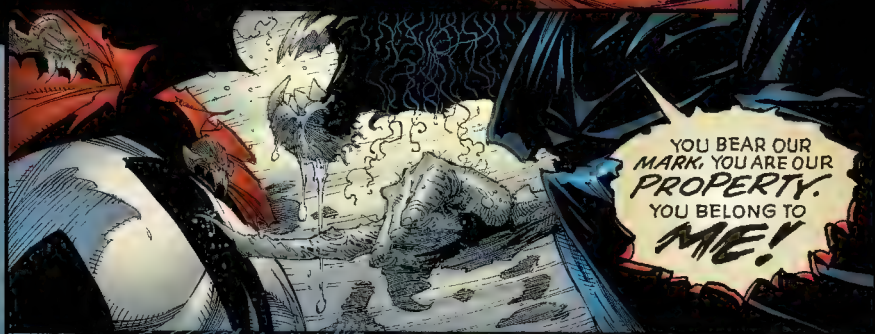
ARE YOU
SMIRKING
UNDER THAT
MASK? DO YOU
THINK THIS IS FUNNY?
LOOK AROUND YOU.
THIS IS THE
HISTORY OF
YOUR KIND.

**TEN
THOUSAND
GENERATIONS**
OF **HELLSPAWN**,
ALL BOUND FOREVER
IN THE CHAINS
OF HELL.

EACH ONE
SURE THEY
COULD SOMEHOW
ESCAPE THEIR FATE,
AND EVERY ONE WAS
WRONG. DO YOU
REALLY THINK
YOU'RE **THAT**
SPECIAL?



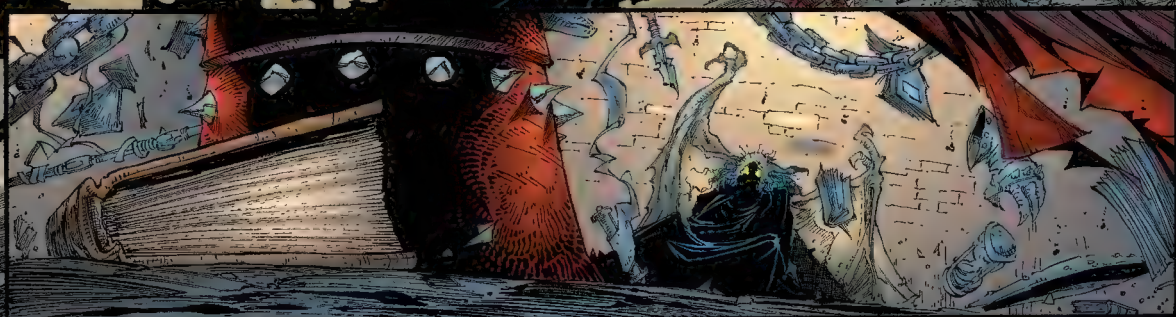
THERE IS BUT
ONE THING
IN THIS UNIVERSE
THAT CAN UNDO ME,
AND **YOU** ARE
NOT IT.



YOU BEAR OUR
MARK, YOU ARE OUR
PROPERTY.
YOU BELONG TO
ME!



NOW...
ARE YOU
GOING TO BE A
GOOD LITTLE
SOLDIER OR
NOT?



NOT.




LOOK AT ME.
I DON'T BELONG
TO YOU. I DON'T
BELONG TO
ANYONE.

I DON'T GIVE
A DAMN ABOUT
YOUR LITTLE WAR.
I DON'T GIVE A
DAMN ABOUT THIS...
THIS HISTORY.
HISTORY BEGINS
NOW, WITH
ME.




DO
YOU
KNOW
WHAT
THIS
IS?




AH, I SEE YOU
DO. THE LANCE OF AN
ANGELIC HUNTRESS.
CHARGED WITH THE
LIGHT OF HEAVEN
ITSELF.

AAAAH.
BUT HOW
CAN--

HOW CAN
I TOUCH IT
WITHOUT BEING
DESTROYED?
BECAUSE YOUR
RULES NO LONGER
APPLY TO ME.
AND NEITHER
DO THEIRS.



YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
I'VE BECOME.
YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT I'VE
LEARNED. I'VE SEEN
THE TRUTH. AND
I KNOW YOUR
DIRTY LITTLE
SECRET.




THE ONE
HEAVEN AND
HELL HAVE BEEN
KEEPING FROM
MAN SINCE THE
DAWN OF TIME.

WE
DON'T
NEED YOU.
YOU NEED
US! ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT?

GET THAT
AWAY
FROM ME!






HOW DARE
YOU... HOW
DARE YOU! IF
WE WERE IN MY
REALM, I WOULD
REND YOUR SOUL TO
ATOMS FOR THIS...
AFFRONT!



BUT
WE'RE
NOT IN
YOUR REALM.
WE ARE IN
MINE.



LOOK AT
ME. I WANT
YOU TO REMEMBER
THE MAN WHO DID
THAT TO YOU.
REMEMBER THIS
DAY AND KNOW
THAT YOU ARE NOT
WELCOME
HERE.

THIS
WORLD AND
ITS SHADOWS
BELONG TO ME NOW.
FROM NOW ON, MEN
SHALL ANSWER
TO THEIR OWN
CONSCIENCE. AND
WHEN THEY WILL
NOT, THEY SHALL
ANSWER
TO ME.



DO WE
UNDERSTAND
EACH OTHER?



GOOD.



LATER.



WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME THINGS GOT INTERESTING AROUND HERE.

NEXT:
THREE
USES
OF THE

KNIFE





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE